OFFICE OF STATEWIDE HEALTH PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

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MEDIA ADVISORY

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CALIFORNIA HOSPITALS TO BEGIN REPORTING SEISMIC SAFETY EVALUATIONS

SACRAMENTO – Beginning the first week of January 2001, the State of California, Office of Statewide Health Planning and Development (OSHPD) will begin receiving seismic safety evaluation reports from hospitals throughout the State.

As mandated in SB 1953 (Alquist/1994), all 450 general acute care hospitals will be submitting evaluations for each of the estimated 2,700 hospital buildings throughout the state. Because of the volume of the submittals that will be filed with the State, OSHPD's listing of hospital building ratings is expected to be available to the public in 45-60 days.

These required evaluations will provide, for the first time, a statewide perspective of the likely performance of hospital buildings during an earthquake. In addition, OSHPD will know just how many hospital buildings were built prior to 1973 and are more likely to require significant retrofitting to meet current seismic safety requirements.

During the coming year, hospitals will also be filing seismic compliance plans with OSHPD. These plans must be filed no later than January 2002, and will set forth the hospitals intent to correct deficiencies in phases by 2030. A specific mandate of SB 1953 is that hospital buildings evaluated as a risk to life must be mitigated by January 1, 2008. Hospitals deemed to be high risk have several options for correction: replacement, retrofit, or removing acute care hospital functions. Each hospital will assess the cost of these options as it plans for the future.

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David Carlisle, MD, Ph.D., Director, Office of Statewide Health Planning and Development, has begun meeting with the California Healthcare Association and other interested parties to address industry concerns.

"OSHPD is committed to maintaining access to earthquake safe facilities and quality health care in California. We are confident that through collaboration with our health care partners, and consumer groups, ways can be found for hospitals to meet the new standards, so that they can continue to provide safe and necessary health care during and after an earthquake," Dr. Carlisle said.

Contact David Keast, Esq., Acting Assistant Director of Public Affairs for information regarding SB 1953 seismic safety implementation for OSHPD.